

THIS ISSUE IS A HIRI-TRIBUTE TO THE GENIUS OF ALEJANDRO JODOROWSKY. EVER SINCE EL TOPO FRACTURED MY CINEMATIC PERCEPTIONS ALMOST 20 YEARS AGO, I'VE BEEN A DEVOTED FAN. UNFORTUNATELY THE ONLY OTHER FILM OF HIS I'VE SEEN IS HOLY MOUNTAIN. JODOROWSKY'S RE-EMERGENCE WITH SANTE SANGRE WILL HOPEFULLY ESTABLISH THE MAN'S PLACE IN THE CINEMATIC PANTHOON. BELOW IS AN INTERVIEW WITH JODOROWSKY CONDUCTED BY STEPHEN BISSETTE WHICH HE HAS GRACIOUSLY ALLOWED ETC TO PRINT.

I HAD THE RARE PLEASURE OF MEETING AND SPENDING A DAY WITH THE LEGENDARY ALEJANDRO JODOROWSKY. THE NIGHT BEFORE, I CAUGHT THE BOSTON FILM FESTIVAL SHOWING OF ALEJANDRO'S NEW FILM, SANTE SANGRE, AND THE NEXT MORNING WE MET AS HE AND HIS PRODUCER CLAUDIO ARGENTO (YES!!) LEFT THE FESTIVAL'S SPECIAL SHOWING OF THE RARE 1937 JEWISH HORROR FILM, THE DYBBUK. AFTER A FEW HOURS SPENT GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER A BIT AND MAINLY TALKING ABOUT COMICS (ALEJANDRO HAS MADE A COMFORTABLE LIVING IN FRANCE WRITING COMICS -- GRAPHIC ALBUMS -- FOR MANY OF THE MOST PROMINENT FRENCH AND BELGIAN ARTISTS), WE WERE JOINED OVER LUNCH BY CLAUDIO. I TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO INTERVIEW THEM ABOUT THEIR COLLABORATION ON SANTE SANGRE; THAT INTERVIEW WILL APPEAR IN GOREZONE, BUT I'VE SAVED SOME OF THE JUICIEST PARTS AND MORE ESOTERIC POINTS FOR CRAIG AND YOU, HIS READERS. WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, HEHEHEHEHEHEHEHE'S ALEJANDRO. AS WE DISCUSS ONE OF THE FILM'S CENTRAL STAGE ACTS, INVOLVING THE MURDERER'S JUGGLING SKILLS....

S.R. BISSETTE

JODO: IN THE JUGGLING SCENES, I AM A FELLINI WITH BALLS! THREE BALLS! I AM A BASTARD! (LAUGH)

SRB: THE TATTOO ON THE MURDERER'S CHEST: WAS THAT PART OF THE ACTUAL MURDERER'S STORY?

JODO: NO. THAT WAS MY INVENTION. I USED THAT, AND THE EAGLE FLYING, AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FILM. AND THERE ARE NO TITLES. NO TITLES UNTILL THE END OF THE FILM.

SRB: I ALSO WANTED TO SPEAK ABOUT JUAN LOPEZ MONTEZUMA. DID HE PRODUCE EL TOPO? SOME SOURCES SAY IT'S HIS CLAIM TO FARE...

JODO: (ALMOST SPITS OUT A MOUTHFUL OF FOOD IN RESPONSE) WELL...HE WAS AN INVESTOR. HE PUT ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS INTO THE MOVIE! (LAUGH) NO. I PRODUCED IT. HE MADE HORROR PICTURES WITH MY PHOTOGRAPHER, RAFAEL CORRADI, AND ONE OF MY PRODUCERS, WHO MADE SOME MARKETING DEAL. THE PRODUCER FOR THE HOLY MOUNTAIN AND EL TOPO, HIS NAME IS ROBERTO VISKIN, WAS A VERY SERIOUS PERSON. HE WAS ENGLISH...VERY SERIOUS. ALLEN KLEIN GAVE MONEY TO MAKE THE HOLY MOUNTAIN. SOMETHING LIKE A MILLION AND A HALF. HE TAKES HALF OF THAT TO PRODUCE HIS OWN PICTURES. (LAUGHTER) HE PRODUCED MONTEZUMA. HE PRODUCED THREE MORE PICTURES, LITTLE PICTURES. AND HE LOST ALL THE MONEY, AND ROBERT TAICHEN CAME AND PUT UP THE MONEY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FILMING. MONTEZUMA, WITH

MY MONEY HE MADE HIS PICTURES.

CLAUDIO: OH MY GOD!

[[WHEN I ASKED ALEJANDRO IF HE WOULD LIKE TO DO MORE HORROR FILMS, HE WAS ENTHUSIASTIC, TO SAY THE LEAST! THOUGH (AS YOU WILL SEE IN THE GOREZONE VERSION OF THIS INTERVIEW), CLAUDIO SEEMED TO SEE THE HORROR LABEL AS A STIGMA, ALEJANDRO WAS DELIGHTED TO PURSUE THE NOTION!]]

JODO: EVIL DEAD 2. DID YOU SEE THAT? FANTASTIC! FREDDY (A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET) 4. STREET TRASH. I KNOW AND LOVE THE HORROR FILM. LISTEN, I INVITED CLAUDIO TO SEE THE DYBOOK, BECAUSE MYSELF, I HAVE A FEELING, WHEN I DON'T LIKE THESE STORIES, I HAVE A FEELING FOR OTHER HISTORIES, I HAVE A FEELING FOR THAT HISTORY, NOT AS IT IS, BUT MY FEELING IS, WHEN YOU MAKE THE EXORCIST, YOU'RE DEALING WITH DEMONS, WITH MONRO, WITH OBJECTION, BUT IF YOU CAN MAKE A HORROR PICTURE WHERE THE MONSTROSITIES ARE MOVING BY LOVE, THROUGH LOVE, IT CAN BE VERY VERY ARTISTIC, I'M BEING CRAZY HERE! IT COULD BE FOMMIDABLE, IN THE DYBOOK, WHEN THEY MAKE THE INCANTATIONS, THE SOUL OF THE TWO PERSONS ARE FIGHTING, THERE'S A BIG FIGHT AND THE COUCH AND CHAIRS MOVE! EVERYTHING STARTS TO MAKE LOVE! EVERY OBJECT MAKES LOVE! IT'S AN EXPRESSION OF LOVE, I THINK I CAN BE FANTASTIC, FOR ME IT WOULD BE FANTASTIC, BUT IN ORDER TO CONVINCE CLAUDIO, I WILL LIKE ONE DAY, IF NOT TODAY, TO MAKE THE FILM, BUT NOT IN A JEWISH WAY, MY WAY, THE JEWS ARE NOT LIKE THAT TODAY! IT IS ABOUT A MAN INVOLVED IN MAGIC, ALL CEMENORIALS, BUT MADE BY MODERN MEN... IN HOLLAND, THEY HAVE A LOT OF CINE MADE BY MAGIC! THEY ARE FINDING THEY KILL BABIES, IT IS TERRIBLE WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH THE BLACK MAGIC IN HOLLAND, IN HOLLAND, DRUGS ARE FREE, IT IS TERRIBLE! THE BIGGEST PROBLEM IS BLACK MAGIC,

CLAUDIO: WHAT ABOUT LOS ANGELES?

JODO: NO, I WILL TELL YOU, IN AMERICA, THE POLICE ARE VERY STRONG, BUT IN HOLLAND, THEY ARE NOT SO STRONG, THEY ARE PASSIVE TO THE PHENOMENON, NO ONE SUSPECTED AN INUNDATION OF BLACK MAGIC,

THIS IS WHY I THINK IF I MAKE THE VOODOO, IN THAT AMBIENCE, IT WOULD BE FANTASTIC! IT WOULD BE FANTASTIC! I DON'T KNOW, I MAY PREFER TO DO THAT BEFORE SONS OF EL TOPO, EVEN I DON'T KNOW, I WANT TO MAKE A HORROR PICTURE LIKE THAT, BUT I WANT TO CHANGE THE PREMISE, WHERE YOU ARE SEEING THE MONSTROSITY, BUT YOU ARE LOVING THAT, NOT BY EVIL, BY GOOD, NO ONE HAS REALLY DONE SOMETHING LIKE THAT, I COULD DO IT! FANTASTIC, I AM TRYING TO CHANGE, TO REVERSE, THE MEANING, I THINK IT IS MAYBE COMING FROM MY FATHER WHEN I WENT TO THE BEACH WITH HIM! HE WOULD TAKE THE OCTOPUS, AND TURN THE OCTOPUS FROM THIS SIDE TO THIS SIDE (TURN IT INSIDE OUT!), AND IT DIED, I WANT TO RETURN TO THE HORROR, BUT IN A SPIRITUAL WAY, IN THE COMICS, IN THE STUDY OF HORROR MOVIES, I DON'T DISCOVER THIS: THEY DON'T KNOW THEY ARE IN A SPIRITUAL SENSE, THEY ARE! WE ARE! YOU ARE! THROUGH THE MADNESS, THROUGH THE MONSTER OF THE UNCONSCIOUS, THROUGH DEATH...

TRANSCENDANCE THROUGH DEATH. IF SOMEBODY COULD DO THAT, IT WOULD BE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE.

SRB: I THINK PEOPLE WHO WORK WITHIN THE GENRE ARE MAKING UP TO THAT. THAT THERE HAS TO BE A HIGHER GOAL THAN SIMPLY JOLTING AN AUDIENCE.

JODO: LISTEN. MUSICAL-COMEDIES ARE POPULAR. I WENT TO LONDON ESPECIALLY TO SEE THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA. I WAS HAPPY. AS A CHILD. WITH THAT. HAPPY. HAPPY. IT'S BAD THEATRE, BECAUSE IT'S POPULAR THEATRE. BUT THE MONSTER WHO IS SINGING IS SO BEAUTIFUL... IF I DID THE DYBBUK, I WOULD DO IT AS AN OPERA WRITTEN BY PETER GABRIEL. A NOCK OPERA. IT WOULD BE FANTASTIC. A HORROR MUSICAL. A HORROR OPERA. NOTHING CONICAL.

CLAUDIO: WELL, SANTA SANGRE IS THE BEST MUSICAL POSSIBLE TO DO!

JODO: I WANTED TO DO THAT AS A PLAY AT ONE TIME. WHEN I WROTE IT. I WANTED TO DO THAT. I BELIEVE NOW, THE HORROR MUSICAL IS THE NEXT THING!

EUROTRASH READERS. BE PREPARED! IN THE MEANTIME, KEEP YOUR EARS TO THE RAILROAD TRACK FOR NEWS OF SANTA SANGRE'S OPENING: IT HAS FOUND A DISTRIBUTOR. EXPANDED ENTERTAINMENT (A DISTRIBUTION WING OF LAWNAKE WEST COAST THEATRE CHAIN), THOUGH AS YET NO RELEASE DATE OR CIRCUIT HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED. IF YOU'D LIKE TO SEE HIS HALLUCINOGENIC COMICSWORK, CHECK OUT THE INCAL (ART BY JEAN GIRAUD, AKA "MOEBIUS", 3 VOLUMES, EPIC/MARVEL GRAPHIC NOVELS) AND TABOO 4, PUBLISHED BY YOURS TRULY, COMING OUT IN THE SPRING OF 1990. WE'VE PRESENTING THE FIRST ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF JODO'S INITIAL COLLABORATION WITH MOEBIUS. THE 30 PAGE HORROR TALE "THE EYES OF THE CAT", WHICH COINCIDENTALLY SHARES BIRD-OF-PREY IMAGERY WITH SANTA SANGRE. CHECK IT OUT!

S.R.BISSETTE

Donald Chinm debuts this issue with a perceptive review of Jodorowsky's hallucinogenic THE HOLY MOUNTAIN. Donald is looking for the cult film THE COMMITTEE so if you have access to it contact me.

THE HOLY MOUNTAIN (1973) REVIEWED BY DONALD CHINM
DIRECTED BY ALEJANDRO JODOROWSKY

When a city dweller goes out into the country to get away, he is vulnerable to a truthness and purity of nature that is totally absent from the city. When a movie goes "climbs" THE HOLY MOUNTAIN, he is vulnerable to something that is not present in any other movie! We are all into films for different reasons. We all have our favorite titles which we consider to be our elite and eccentric personal secrets. Alejandro Jodorowsky knows what and why we crave the things we do. In THE HOLY MOUNTAIN, he

stands square and firm and delivers the goods on a silver platter. We are not just typical movie junkies, we went more and more! Jodorowsky knows this. THE HOLY MOUNTAIN is not a sequel to EL TOPO but rather the reciprocal of that film. What EL TOPO does is weave a web of symbolism and truth across our brain... and now that we have truth, we want more! Alejandro Jodorowsky knows this. This time he offers to take us beyond the truth.

PLOT: The alchemist/master (played by Jodorowsky) is first approached by a thief who wants gold. The master makes gold from the thief's excrement and then takes him on as an apprentice. Then we meet 9 of the world's most powerful industrialist, politicians, etc who have influence and wealth. They dictate how the rest of us will live. They've all become bored with their power and have decided to do something exciting. They have all come to the master in search of a new gimmick to break their malaise. The master has just the thing for them. He tells them about the Holy Mountain, where on the summit live nine immortals who have obtained the secret of everlasting life. The master tells them that that they will climb the Holy Mountain and upon reaching the summit they will attack the nine immortals and steal their secret. He makes the climbers burn all their money before departing for the Holy Mountain. On the way they take part in many rituals and meetings with strange people. Just before they reach the summit, each experience a vision of death. These scenes (and most of the film) contain some of the most warped and alienated images ever committed to celluloid. Finally they reach the top where the 9 immortals are. The treasure they took them so long to reach is even more than any of them had planned for. The master has fooled everyone, and the gift he has for them is a vision/message/truth so pure and relevant and straight that it is a hard-hitting lightning bolt of reality for everyone, including the viewer.

This is a rough plot outline that you might not sort out on first viewing of this movie. For this is an Alejandro Jodorowsky film and true to form, it is filled with every type of symbolism and mental effect possible. At times it is truly hard to comprehend the film due to so many images seen at such a rapid fire pace. It is almost like the sen story of the master pouring tea (the movie) into the student's cup (our eyes) at an overflowing rate. Jodorowsky is making the viewer pay the price just like the nine climbers in the movie, for immortality is a very expensive thing. The web of truth and wonder that left us entranced and enthralled in EL TOPO is the perfect setup for THE HOLY MOUNTAIN. Jodorowsky has a handful of magic dust and he is tempting us along like a horse with a carrot. We follow him all the way through the movie and at the end he floors us from the blindside! We are left dumbfounded and feeling foolish and changed.

THE HOLY MOUNTAIN was made in 1973 and suffers only slightly in its dated techniques. Aside from some very small personal gripes (slightly long scenes that might have been better condensed) this is a movie that is still light-years ahead of its time and one of the few that challenges the actual processes of filmmaking and

filmmaking. This is the essence of film. This is the essence of Alejandro Jodorowsky.

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SANTA SANGRE (1989) DIRECTED BY ALEJANDRO JODOROWSKY
REVIEWED BY STEPHEN BISSETTE

Despite my pessimism (see my article "Open Pockets, Empty hearts" in the May Gorezone), 1990 has kicked off with a bang. For Eurotrash readers and lovers, there could not possibly be a better way to kick off the new decade than Jodorowsky's audacious SANTA SANGRE. The profile of talents alone whets one's appetite: Jodorowsky's first film in a decade, as outrageous as EL TOPO and HOLY MOUNTAIN, though more accessible and DEFINITELY a genre masterpiece...Claudio Argento and Angelo Lacone, co-producers of definitive Giallo like DEEP RED, CAT O' NINE TAILS, FOUR FLIES ON GREY VELVET, TENEBRAE and PHENOMENA...Euseo Cardona Jr., producer/director of corkers like (choke!) NIGHT OF THE BLOODY APES, SURVIVE!, and GUYANA: CULT OF THE DAMNED...Franco Zeffirelli cinematographer Daniele Mannuzzi...and the kicker is, the film more than lives up to its considerable promise. The U.S. distributor, Expanded Entertainment (owned by the West Coast Landmark Theatre chain, and packagers/distributors of the successful annual Tournee of Animation anthologies), is currently test marketing SANTA SANGRE in selected "college town" theatres across the country, so you may indeed get to see the film on the big screen...as it should be.

The film's opening (sans credits) is immediately engaging, introducing us to Felix (Axel Jodorowsky), roosting on a bare tree trunk in a cement asylum room, feeding on raw fish like bird of prey. His chest is adorned with the tattoo of an eagle, and as the camera moves in on it it transforms into a living bird, who then soars over Mexico City and down to the Cirque of the Gringo, twelve years prior...

SANTA SANGRE has two distinct movements: the first, featuring eight year old Adan Jodorowsky as young Felix, is like a dark desecrated version of Fellini's ARABCOOD. Felix is a sensitive, adept child who performs in the circus, his closest friends a dwarf (Jesus Juarez) and the deaf-mute Alma (Paviola Elena Tapia). The underbelly of the circus life lies with his parents, the brutish, alcoholic knife thrower Orgo (Dean Stockwell) and his beautiful but fanatical mother Concha (Blanca Guerra, who made quite an impression in Alex Cox's WALKER). While Orgo indulges in his lust for Alma's mother, the tattooed woman Mujer Tatuada (Thelma Tixou), Concha worships her patron saint, Santa Sangre, in an oversized temple she and her acolytes have built around a huge pool of phoney blood. Santa Sangre -- "Holy Blood" -- was a little girl who fought off a savage attack by two rapists, retaining her virginity even though cut off her arms and left her to bleed to death.

When the Catholic church condemns Concha's temple as heresy and orders it bulldozed, she returns to the circus to find Orgo seducing Mujer Tatuada; she attacks Orgo, only to be mesmerized

by his flashing knife blades and raped in the circus hay tent. As she screams in orgasm, Jodorowsky cuts to a closeup of a dying elephant's trunk, spouting blood as Fenix and his friends comfort the dying animal...coming on the heels of orgo and the tattooed woman's lewd performance with the decidedly phallic knives, Jodo has more than laid the groundwork for the explosive sexual mutilation and violence to follow.

After the surreal, beautiful and bloody funeral for the elephant (plunged into the city's dump to be torn to pieces by the hungry villagers in a disturbingly festive tableau), the evening circus performance find Concha doing her trapeze act. Looking down from the big top, she sees Orgo and Mujer leaving the tent in each other's arms. Looking Fenix in their trailer, from which he views the subsequent mayhem, Concha attacks Orgo and Mujer while they fuck, throwing corrosive acid into his groin and face. Enraged, Orgo cuts off her arms with his knives, stumbles out into the street (cupping his seared genitals like the castrated General in EL TOPO), and cuts his own throat. Fenix watches helplessly as he dies, the dogs licking at his spurting jugular, and as Alma is borne away by her frantic mother, Mujer.

The second movement returns us to twenty-year old Fenix (Axel Jodorowsky), incarcerated in a progressive asylum with other emotionally disturbed and downcast syndrome youths. Fenix is, understandably, quite mad. During a humorous episode in which a group of the inmates are taken to a movie only to be intercepted by an opportunistic pimp who takes them to the red light district, Fenix sees Mujer Tatuada. Mujer is now a whore and madam, forcing the teenage Alma (Sabrina Dennison) to service some particularly brutal customers. His violent memories stirred, Fenix returns to the asylum, only to be coaxed out of his cell the next morning by his armless mother...

Less than half of the film's running time has passed, and already Jodorowsky has given us a richer, more evocative and emotionally textured story and vision than any dozen American films (in any genre!) have delivered in the past year. Yet to come is Concha and Fenix's bizarre stage act, with the son serving as the mother's arms, an act that continues into the privacy of their own chambers; the prolonged bloody murder; Alma's panic-stricken flight from the red light district during the festival of the dead, her confrontation with the man who peels his own ear off; Fenix's ever-erupting hallucinations, including an erection that explodes from his pants as an aneconds that attempts to crush him to death; Fenix's encounter with "La Santa" (Dorothy Herndon), the transsexual Mexican wrestler; the procession of pallid, mutilated women, risen from their graves in the garden; and more, more than I can tell.

Jodorowsky tells his story, and tells it well, but the intensity of his baroque vision always threatens to split the screen. It is intoxicating in its intensity and energy, losing steam only in its revelatory finale that (for this viewer, in any case) makes its trump card obvious before Jodorowsky chooses to show his

hand... a disappointment easily forgiven, given the emotional rollercoaster ride and torrent of provocative imagery that proceeds it. Jodorowsky's narrative may let him down in the last act, but he has not let it down: every moment, every inventive possibility, has been brought to vivid life from the first frame. What more can one ask of a film?

SANTA SANGRE is truly rousing here, hallucinatory, terrifying, deeply moving, and hilarious by turns. Its extreme violence and twisted sexuality is grounded by its heart: SANTA SANGRE is, essentially a quest film, depicting Fenix's desperate search for identity and sanity. That he does so (and succeeds!) through a succession of murders is certainly a dangerous and subversive element, though it is again grounded by Alma's role as the angel of redemption, a traditional enough (almost fairy tale) storytelling device given the raw edge of Alma's sordid life in the slum apartment and the extremity of Fenix's dementia. It is also remarkable that what is basically the tale of a serial murder (based on the crimes of Mexican murderer Jorge Cardona, who DID find sanity and raise a family after killing thirteen women and spending years in the asylum) can be such a colorful and exciting film: the polar opposite of HENRY:PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER (1986), the best American film made covering similar terrain in a very different, downbeat manner. The difference is that Jodorowsky sees it as a tale of redemption, of the elevation of the human spirit from the insanity via a bath of blood, as a great adventure through the corridors of madness and despair in search of light. Precious few directors would even attempt to paint such a canvas of outrageous sexuality, horror, and surrealism, with such broad strokes; Jodorowsky not only attempts it, he masters it.

Most miraculous is the effortless synthesis of three genres -- the Giallo of Sava (MATCHET FOR A HONEYMOON is especially relevant here) and Argento, the Mexican tradition of horror, and truly personal avant garde cinema Jodorowsky previously explored in EL TOPO and HOLY MOUNTAIN -- into one seamless, cohesive, utterly satisfying emotional experience. For this alone, SANTA SANGRE is essential viewing, the first seminal horror film of the new decade. Recommended: DON'T MISS IT!

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A NOTE FROM STEPHEN BISSETTE: " Can anyone confirm or deny the existence of (and maybe steer us to copies of) the following films, mentioned in the revised edition of Kim Newman's Book, NIGHTMARE MOVIES?"

- 1)Eugenio Decato's CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST 2(1987)--we don't think it exist.
- 2)Franco Prosperi's IL CANNIBAL (1979)--probably Franco's MONDO CANNIBALE (1979)
- 3)Giuseppe Maria Scotese's CANNIBAL DOMANI (1983)
- 4)Roy Garrett's AMAZONIA (1986)-- can't be original title of WHITE SLAVE!

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Sorry for all the text but I had a lot of great material(hence the extra page).See you in 30 days (this issue was late too!).